

# Performance and the Partial

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## Performance and the Partial

### Hetty Blades

*I wonder what the performers have been doing before I arrive. What stories have been told? What rules have been introduced?*

*I can hear paper rustling. I catch a glimpse of someone looking up from their reading. I wonder what they are looking at. I return my gaze to the magic show.*

In what follows, I reflect on my experience of two works which draw attention to partial experiences for spectators. The experiences are partial in as much as the audience attend only part of the duration of the work, or else stays for the whole duration, but is restricted in their ability to see every part of the performance. First, I discuss my experience and analysis of two sharings of *Still Life*, by choreographer Hamish MacPherson.<sup>1</sup> *Still Life* comprises 11 one-hour performances which overlap during the six hour duration of the work. Audiences are invited to attend for one hour and therefore cannot see the work in its entirety. Addressing this unconventional structure, I think through how my reading of the work is informed by its necessarily partial nature. Second, I draw *Still Life* into relationship to *Papier mutlifforme et Papier Comestible*, a work by choreographer Emilie Gallier, which also offers a partial experience. This time through the division of the performance space and construction of simultaneous worlds, rather than through the temporal structure of the work. In bringing these works into dialogue, I explore how experience of performance might be both partial and complete. While these artworks deal with the partial in different ways to one another, I suggest they raise similar questions, which are pertinent due to the way that the modes of attention they provoke are increasingly required in our encounters with contemporary dance and performance works as artists rethink the nature of performance. I focus on two key ideas: First, I consider how these works raise questions about what it means to access a choreographic work and second, how experiences that are simultaneously partial and complete rely on new ways of thinking about how we experience and analyse performance.

MacPherson describes *Still Life* as “one work made up of 11 one-hour performances, overlapping over six hours. Individual performances do not have specific tickets, audiences can enter between noon and 5pm every 30 minutes and stay for an hour” (MacPherson 2018a). Despite its length, MacPherson suggests the work is not a durational piece because it is not about a single thing happening for a long time, but has a more traditional theatrical structure in that there are various scenes in which quite different things happen (MacPherson 2018b). Before attending the first sharing, I receive an email from MacPherson explaining that audiences can enter the performance every half an hour. When I arrive the door is closed, implying the performance has already started. There is someone else waiting outside the door, unsure whether or not to open it. Together we enter the studio. We loiter, not sure where to sit. The studio space is hazy, like a smoke machine has been blowing. MacPherson, Paul Hughes and Antonio de la Fe and are moving in the space, which is littered with brightly coloured material. In the centre of the room Kimberley Harvey sits motionless in her wheelchair, shrouded in various items of clothing and tied up in rope. Her

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<sup>1</sup> This work is now called *NO CLIMAX YET*, but has yet to be performed as such.

whole body, including her face and head, is covered. The performers are clearly in the middle of something. I have entered in the middle, but this is where it starts for me. I sit and watch as de la Fe, MacPherson and Hughes continue to move. Harvey remains still. I am unsettled by the way that the one person in the group who appears to be disabled remains stationary and bound, while three people who appear non-disabled move freely. I feel relieved when Harvey starts to untie herself, slowly releasing herself from the fabric and rope. I am aware that I don't have the whole story. I don't know what has come before or whether knowing this would have any bearing on why the scene unsettles me. Have there been relationships established that I *should* know about? What if I am missing some key information that will inform my experience and understanding of this moment?



Figure 1: Kimberley Harvey and Hamish MacPherson. Credit: Arturo Bandinelli

The performers re-set themselves into new places. A new scene begins.

Hughes lies on the floor and reads from a series of cue cards to direct de la Fe in various tasks. Hughes is mostly still although he moves his arms and face. The tasks he directs de la Fe to perform include giving him something to drink and telling him things about himself. At times, de la Fe moves Hughes around the space, dragging his body while Hughes remains immobile. Hughes' directions are curt but soft, he adds 'please' to the request only once or twice. De la Fe follows each instruction diligently.



Figure 2: Paul Hughes lies on the floor and directs Antonio de la Fe. Credit: Arturo Bandinelli

### Passivity and Agency

The relationship between still and moving or passive and active bodies is a theme that runs across both these scenes and is a topic that has been an artistic concern of MacPherson's for some time, resulting in the publication *Still Life*, currently on its third issue, and a series of workshops preceding this work (see MacPherson 2018c). Despite the simplicity of the structure, Hughes' and de la Fe's duet does not make for easy viewing. There is no explicit conflict between the two, but the dynamic between them and Hughes' performance of passivity raises questions for me about ethics of a mobile body enacting immobility that are linked to questions about agency. To put it another way, I feel uncomfortable with the idea that Hughes is voluntarily inhabiting a mode of being that is often involuntary.

What I realise through watching the exchange between de la Fe and Hughes is that my discomfort with the performance of passivity has to do with an assumption that mobility and agency are inter-linked and that passive bodies lack agency. The exchanges between Hughes and de la Fe and Hughes' directive role highlight some of the nuances of care relationships. The servitude of the moving body reframes my initial assumptions and draws attention to the potential agency of the still body.

Passivity has not been theorised extensively in dance and performance studies but there has been a fair amount of critical attention paid to stillness, with scholars often drawing attention to its potential agency. Notably, Andre Lepecki's influential book *Exhausting Dance* (2006) positions stillness in dance as a rupture in dance's historical ontological association with movement. For Lepecki, stillness and slowness in choreographic works propose a 'critique of representation' (2006: 45) and interrogate dance's 'political economy' by questioning its relationship to modernity and its association with movement (2006: 46).

Perspectives such as Lepecki's that view stillness as a form of resistance pose questions about the distinction between voluntary and involuntary stillness. While the decision not to engage physically or verbally can be seen as a form of resistance and agency, viewing stillness this way relies on an assumption that the still or silent act is a choice. Thinking back to my initial response to *Still Life*, the discomfort I felt at Harvey's stillness was different to Hughes'. I was aware that Harvey was choosing to be still, had chosen to perform in the work and was likely to have contributed to the choreographic decisions, so it was not that I didn't recognise her agency in the situation. Nevertheless, the non-disabled performers moving, while Harvey remained still and bound and Hughes' voluntary embodying of immobility unsettled me in different ways.

Choosing to be immobile, still, or passive can be fairly easily understood as a form of agency, however, when a person's mobility is shaped through age, illness or disability, stillness is arguably more complex.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the assumption that someone who has reduced mobility has limited agency is problematic and highlights the valorizing of mobility, not only in the history of dance and performance but in culture more generally. As Lepecki's association of modernity with movement highlights, ideas around 'progress' in western capitalist cultures is linked with movement and the associated quality of productivity, an idea mirrored on David Bissell and Gillian Fuller's book *Stillness in a Mobile World* (2011).

Bissell and Fuller offer a rethinking of stillness. Interrogating the association of still bodies with resistance, they suggest that, "stillness is so often conflated with a reductive understanding of resistance where to be still is to resist and to *stand against movement*, with all the determination that this entails" (2011: 2). They go on to suggest that stillness is also often associated with a lack of agency:

Stillness is not just a gesture of refusal. Stillness punctuates the flow of all things: a queuer in line at the bank; a moment of focus; a passenger in the departure lounge; a suspension before a sneeze; a stability of material forms that assemble; a passport photo. Each of these stillnesses pulse through multiple ecologies with multiple effects. Yet, curiously, stillness is so often anticipated, more or less, as an aberration and thus a problem to be dealt with. A moment of emptiness or missed productivity, producing a hobbled subjectivity without active agency. (2011: 3)

The cultural prioritising of movement arguably underpins views that problematically overlook the agency of people with reduced mobility. The performance of various forms of stillness in *Still Life* offers a particular way in to rethinking narratives around illness, aging and disability. As Petra Kuppers writes:

Disabled performers are often aware of the knowledges that have been erected around them: tragic, poor, helpless, heroic, struggling, etc. In the laboratory of the performance situation, these knowledges can be re-examined, and questioned again and again. (2003: 3)

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<sup>2</sup> Sarah Whatley (2019) offers a detailed discussion of questions related to agency, stillness and movement in relation to photographs and films of disabled dancers in the *11 Million Reasons* project.

Bissell and Fuller suggest that viewing stillness as a cessation of movement already assumes its capacities and that what is needed is to disentangle stillness from movement, and a reframing of it as a positive state, rather than a lack or void (2011: 6). I suggest that my experience of *Still Life* enabled me to rethink stillness and question the association of movement with agency and raised questions about how we respond to still and moving bodies. My differing responses to Hughes' and Harvey's stillness was shaped by my awareness that I did not have access to the entire work. The partial nature of my experience generated my discomfort with the performance of involuntary stillness by mobile bodies and with the image of Harvey bound and still while the other performers moved freely. My response therefore demonstrates how the nature of this performance gave space to an interrogation of my own assumptions. Furthermore, the work posed the question to me of how our cultural value systems might be reframed to view involuntary stillness as a cultural norm, as opposed to associating it in any straightforward way with either agency or a lack thereof.

Stillness is neither a straightforward act of resistance or an indication of a lack of agency. Furthermore, dance's relationship with stillness has shifted since Lepecki's text was published. The use of stillness in *Still Life* invokes echoes Lepecki's analysis, but 13 years after this text was published, the expectations of 'dance' and its political associations have shifted. The question of dance's particular ontology and its relationship to movement is arguably less relevant as the boundaries between dance, performance and live art are increasingly fluid. The blurring of forms can be attributed to a number of factors, including the influence of a body of practice by artists such as Xavier Le Roy and Jerome Bel, which prioritises ideas over movement forms. The increased sharing of dance in gallery and museum contexts (Wookey 2015) has also brought the form into closer dialogue with performative traditions associated with visual and live art. In an artistic climate where people working in dance performance frequently draw on movement, speech, text, stillness, imagery, emptiness and silence, Lepecki's suggestion that stillness ruptures the association of dance with movement is no longer pertinent.

The lack of clear distinctions between dance, performance and live art means that instead of drawing on any clear parameters for what dance is, we identify the form through contextual features, such as the place of performance, the way the work is described in the programme, and the naming of the artist as a choreographer. In the field of philosophical aesthetics,<sup>3</sup> there is some debate regarding which properties are relevant to the identity of a work of art. For example, empiricists view the work as categorizable through particular properties (see Davies 2005, Lamarque 2010). Under this view, the presence of structured movement, for example, might be said to be an essential property required for an event to be classified as a dance work, as opposed to another type of performance. However, practices such as MacPherson's which cross multiple categories demonstrate how considering essential properties does not help us to establish the classification of a work. Indeed, there is a strong argument for resisting any type of classification, however, situating a work in relation to other practices helps us to make sense of our experience of it. In order to do this, I suggest that it we often draw on contextual, rather than aesthetic features of

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<sup>3</sup> This term refers to an area of analytic philosophy focused on questions related to the philosophy of art.

the work.<sup>4</sup> Contextual characteristics might include the work's style and function as well as the identity of the author. Following this line of thinking, MacPherson's identity as a choreographer positions this work in the field of dance, however, this does not mean that the work is purely or only a dance work. Importantly, it was made for a festival of performance, theatre and live art, meaning it is situated at the intersection of a number of performative forms. We can therefore view the stillness in the work, through multiple lenses which disentangles it from Lepecki's association of stillness with a radical rupture to dance ontology.

A new day. A new scene. A new studio.

This time, when I enter the performers are dispersed around a large studio. I look for the familiar configurations of care I witnessed last time, but they do not appear. Each performer is busy with their own task. De la Fe engages the audience in conversation, while Harvey, covered in fabric and sitting away from the interaction, provides the prompts. The conversation is disjointed but almost makes sense. At first I search for the logic before relaxing into the fragmentation of the communication. The prompts repeat at times, demonstrating that they arise from a finite bank of possible questions. When it is my turn to talk to de la Fe I notice how they choreograph the microphone, moving it between our mouths at irregular speeds. I diligently wait for it to be placed in front of my mouth before I speak. Sometimes the wait is long, causing a sense of suspense and building anticipation for my response. I found the tension between the sense drama cultivated by the choreography of the microphone and the futility of the conversation, which makes very little sense humorous and engaging.

Next, Harvey directly addresses the audience by asking us what we'd like her to do. At first she looks directly at the person she is speaking to, who subsequently requests something from her. Later there is a shift as she starts to address the room more generally. In response, the audience are quiet, seemingly hesitant to volunteer commands. The shared responsibility of the moment results in some suggestions being made but there is a sense of reluctance from the audience which wasn't there when she addressed people directly.

Meanwhile, MacPherson moves very slowly in the centre of the space.

The relationships in these scenes are very different from the first ones that I encountered. The dynamics of care and the tensions between active and passive bodies is less evident. These are replaced by relationships between the performers and the audience, which cultivate different forms of frisson. What emerged for me in these exchanges was a reframing of the questions I had about agency during my first encounter. For example, I wondered who was in charge of the exchange. I am free to say whatever I want to de la Fe but when their responses mis-align with my answers, it is clear that there are rules to the game that I am not privy to. It does not matter what I say, I have no way of altering the course of the conversation.

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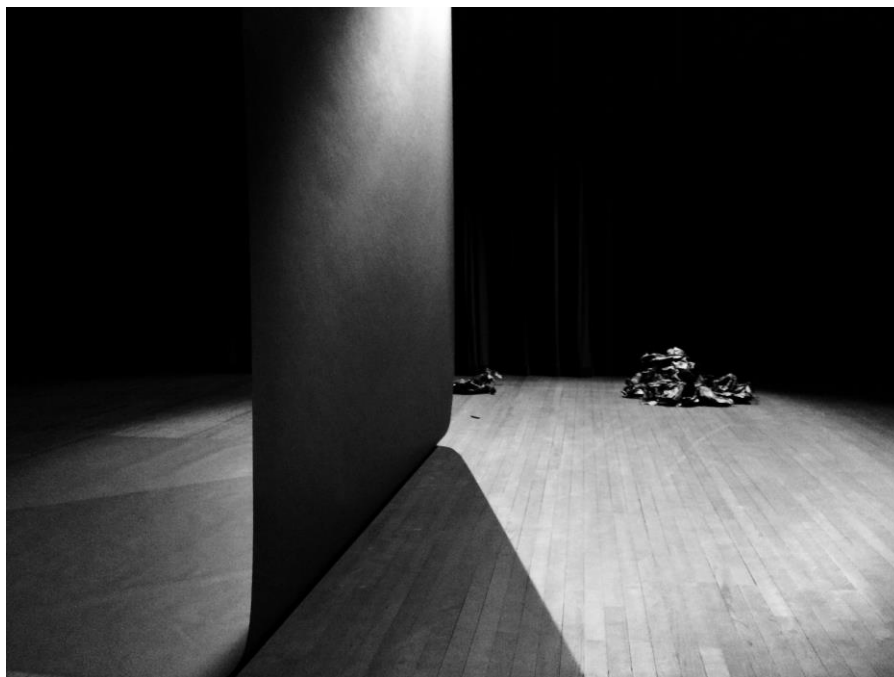
<sup>4</sup> Here I follow contextualist ontologies for art, proposed by Jerrold Levinson (1990), amongst others, by suggesting that it is aspects of the work's context that determine its identity.

My reading of this scenario in relation to agency arises from my previous experience of the work, rather than solely what I encountered on my second visit. Most audience members, will have singular experiences of the work, as they will attend for only one hour. They cannot draw on previous images, feelings or memories to make sense of the scenario they encounter. Realising how I am making links between my two experiences of the work raises highlights the complexities of analysing works that we have a partial experience of. Although I am in the arguably privileged position of having seen two parts of the work, I still feel hesitant in my own analysis of it. I am conscious that I am dipping into a pre-existing world that will continue after I leave the studio and preoccupied with concerns about whether I fully understand the work.

### **Papier mutlifforme et Papier Comestible**

Emilie Gallier's work, *Papier mutliforme et Papier Comestible* deals with the partial in a different way to MacPherson's. I attended a performance of this work at Perdu in Amsterdam on 14 December 2018. In my role as a supervisor for Gallier's practice-based PhD, I had seen aspects of her practice before, but this was the first time I had seen the work in performance.<sup>5</sup>

The audience are invited into the studio space and offered a drink from the bar. The space is dimly lit and a large piece of black paper hangs from the ceiling, delineating one part of the space from another. The paper does not extend the entire width of the room, meaning the two spaces within the space were not strictly divided. On the side where I stood, some chairs are strewn around and stacked at the edge of the space. I catch glimpses of chairs with reading lights attached to them on the other side of the paper.



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<sup>5</sup> Gallier's PhD research is ongoing. The performance I attended was open to the public and was not part of her PhD assessment. She has given her consent for me to write about the work.



Figure 3: Paper separating two sides of the space during a research residency at Regards Dansants in Cherbourg, 2017. Credit: Jamillah Sungkar

Gallier welcomes us to the event and gives a short series of instructions as the audience stand around her on the side of the paper where we had entered. She offers the group a deck of cards and instructs each person to take one. What is depicted on each card determines where we should start the performance. Some of the group are instructed to leave the room. Another group are told to stay on this side of the paper, and the third group, which includes me, are told we can move freely through both parts of the space. The group who leave the room re-enter a few minutes later and walk to the other side of the space. They have their eyes closed and are guided by another member of the audience.

I stay on the side of the paper with the bar and watch as a what seems to be a magic show commences. Camille Gerbeau and Nina Boas sit at a table along with the audience members assigned to this side of the space. The performers generate striking illusions using a large piece of folded paper and perform tricks with cups and balls. The people around the table study the activities in a serious and focused way. This attention creates an atmosphere commonly associated with performance, rather than being reminiscent of the ways people might attend to a magic show in another context.

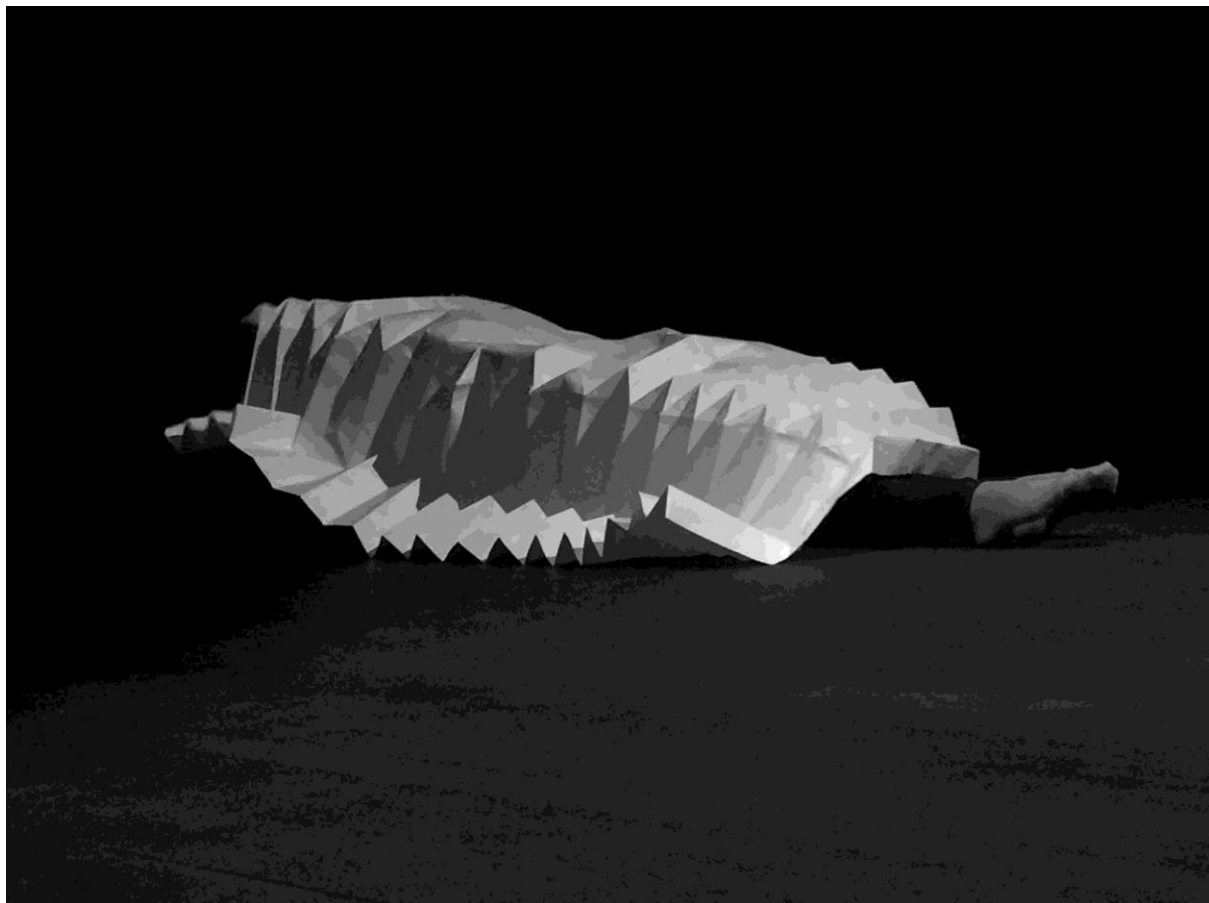


Figure 4: Emilie Gallier during a research residency at Regards Dansants in Cherbourg, 2017. Credit: Jamillah Sungkar

I remain a short distance from the table, positioned so I can also see part of the other space. The performers move between the spaces. I hear noises including the rustling of paper coming from the other side of the paper curtain. I am curious, but although I can move freely, I challenge myself not to move on every whim. I am acutely aware of my split attention, of curiosity about the other side pulling me away from the magic. I play games with myself to see how long I can focus on the magic and try to train my attention.

Each time I hear noises from the other space my attention is drawn in that direction. I resist moving for at least half an hour. I see how long I can last without looking over to the other side of the room. When I fail, I see glimpses of people reading. Some sit on the small number of chairs I am able to see. Each time I look the configuration of people and how they are positioned has changed a little. I see someone eat some paper. Meanwhile, the magic show continues.

While the magic offers a more spectacular aesthetic experience than the reading, I am drawn to that which I don't know. The view of the other side of the space is enticing precisely because of its partial nature.

I finally surrender and move to the other space, which is littered with cards inscribed with writing and drawings. People are reading, some sit on chairs, under the reading lights while others sit and lie on the floor. Large pieces of paper are strewn around the space, the remnants of movement I have missed. The action I had heard earlier has finished and there is sense of calm. I hear laughter from the other side of the space and wonder what I am missing.

The strongest themes that emerges for me during my experience of *Papier mutlifforme et Papier Comestible* is how attention can be choreographed and what role the agency of the spectator plays in the nature of their experience. This theme materialises through the interplay of the content and structure of the work. There is tension between the spectacle of the magic show and the internal, relatively static act of reading. Spectacle has a long tradition in performance (see Lewis 2010) and is considered in dance in relation to the ways the body is choreographed and contextualised (see Burt 2007). Spectacle can be associated with explicit displays of virtuosic dance technique. However, in Gallier's work, the spectacle arises through the magic skills of the performers and the striking aesthetic of the large pieces of paper that they manipulate. Magic is perhaps one of the most overt forms of performance spectacle due to the way its success relies on generating particular visual impacts. This aspect of magic is highlighted through its recontextualization in the performance work *Papier mutlifforme et Papier Comestible*. In contrast, watching someone read in their heads is arguably unspectacular in that the people being seen are not deliberately cultivating a particular aesthetic or visual experience but engaging in an internal process.

The impossibility of seeing both parts of the performance invites me to consider the nature of attention in performance. While the audiences for *Still Life* only access part of the work's duration, in *Papier mutlifforme et Papier Comestible*, the audience attend for the whole event, but are not able to see it all. This results in a negotiation for the viewer regarding how they attend, what they choose to ignore and when they allow themselves to get

distracted. This oscillation of attention between aspects of the work is present in any encounter with an artwork. As spectators, we select what to look at and where to focus our attention. Gallier's explicit choreography of this split attention encourages us to reflect on how we are engaging with and attending to the work. In turn, this highlights how the ways we attend to artworks is always partial, even in cases where we can see all of the content of the work at once.

### **Partial performance and dance work ontology**

Both *Still Life* and *Papier mutlifforme et Papier Comestible* are works which feature partial experiences of the spectators as central to their form. The centrality of the partial has ontological implications. A work that cannot be seen in its entirety by any individual audience member raises questions about what constitutes a 'work' and the expectations we have about how such an entity is to be experienced. While MacPherson points out, there are traditional aspects of *Still Life*'s structure (2018b), whether or not the entire piece follows the tradition of an over-arching narrative is something that each member of the audience can never know. Nevertheless, each individual experience of the work is complete and has structure, narrative and form, as demonstrated in the description of my experience. Similarly, each person's experience of *Papier mutlifforme et Papier Comestible* comprises a unique perspective and no one can see the entire work at once, meaning that each individual experience has a singular beginning, middle and end. Therefore, the spectators' experiences of these two works are simultaneously complete and partial.

This particular way of watching raises questions about what it means to access a work, or to put it another way: Has anyone ever seen *Still Life* or *Papier mutlifforme et Papier Comestible*? If I was to attend a performance of a conventional work in a theatre, which was one hour long and leave after 30 minutes, can I claim to have seen it? This question is of course not exclusive to dance or performance. I might read only two chapters of a 12 chapter novel. Or fast forward part of a film. The question however, is whether in such cases I have read the novel, watched the film or seen the dance work. Instinctively, we might say that if we have engaged only partially that we haven't experienced the work of dance, literature or film. Watching *Still Life* and *Papier mutlifforme et Papier Comestible* however, is necessarily partial, meaning that each audience's experience is also complete.

Questions about the features of dance works are discussed in philosophical aesthetics and dance studies. Key debates include whether works are abstract 'types' or one-off events (Davies 2011; McFee 2011; Meskin 1999), what the properties of works might be (Rubidge 2000; Pakes 2013; Pouillaude 2017) and how they come into existence and are preserved and re-enacted (Pakes 2017). While there is not consensus, many scholars consider the type/token schema useful for articulating the relationship between a work and its performances. Under this view, a work is an abstract entity or 'type' made present through physical performances or 'tokens'. In relation to *Still Life*, this view would consider each 11 hour staging of the work as a token of the type *Still Life*. What then does each viewer experience? Perhaps each viewing is part of a token, although each hour spent watching the work is also a complete experience. The way that the audience are directed to enter at 30 minute intervals and stay one hour sets up the experience as a complete performance event, albeit not an experience of the full work. We might then suggest that each hour-long

experience of the work is a token of *Still Life*. However, under this schema, although tokens can differ from one another, each token is equally an instance of the work.

Thinking of each hour-long performance as a token implies that they are as much an instance of the work as the entire 6-hour performance, which doesn't seem quite right as the entire performance differs so significantly in temporal and structural qualities from each hour-long experience of it. This quandary highlights one of the limitations of the type/token schema, by suggesting that it does not account for performances that involve partial experiences as central to their form. An alternative schema is needed to make sense of these works. I suggest, therefore that the ontological structure of the entire 6-hour version of *Still Life* is a macro-work or 'macro-type' and that each hour-long viewing is a micro-work or 'micro-type'. Each person accesses a micro-work through its token, but no one accesses the macro-work, as it is not possible to see this token. This allows for each audience member's experience to be both partial, in that they haven't experienced the macro-work but also complete as they have accessed a full micro-work. The macro and micro work structure also aligns with *Papier mutiforme et Papier Comestible*. The entire event can be considered the macro work and each audience member's unique perspective the micro work.

This schema complicates the notion of the work as a singular entity manifest through variable performances. Suggesting a work can have other works within it offers a new, multiple way of thinking about what the work might be. Furthermore, I suggest that the question of what it means to access a work extends beyond these two works, or even other works which offer consciously partial experiences. Even if I attend a work in a theatre for its entire duration, have I really seen it? Even when I read a whole book can I really claim to have read it? What kind of attention is required to know that I have really accessed the work? The choreography of the partial in *Still Life* and *Papier mutiforme et Papier Comestible* draws into focus questions about what it means to truly experience at work of art.

These questions return us to discussions about empiricism and the appreciation of art works. Philosopher David Davies suggests that the term aesthetic empiricism refers to views that minimize the role of context or resources, "not available in or derivable from and immediate experiential encounter with an instance of a work" (2004: 25). While Davies and others have argued against this view, this quote demonstrates an assumption within these discourses that we understand implicitly what it means to have an 'immediate experiential encounter' with a work. What *Still Life* and *Papier mutiforme et Papier Comestible* highlight is that our engagement with performance is always partial and is dependent on engaging our attention over the specified duration of the work. Even in more conventional performances, it might be that our attention wanders and we therefore miss part of the action, despite not leaving our seat. Furthermore, we might focus on one particular feature of what is taking place, missing another part of the performance. The idea of an 'immediate encounter' seems to imply that we can access the work directly through an instance of it, whereas I would argue that access is always mediated through attention and therefore necessarily partial. We might then extend the micro/macro work schema to suggest that the macro-work is impossible to access in its entirety. Rather, each person's engagement with

the work, via performance, is a micro-work, which is in part constructed through their attention.

### **Experiencing works partially**

The idea of the 'work' is not only important in metaphysical discussions but also has real-world implications in terms of how it informs our understanding, analysis and experience of performance experiences. For example, whether we feel we have fully experienced the work shapes how we make interpretive and analytical assertions, as demonstrated by my description above. Knowing that I had not experienced the entire (or macro) work of *Still Life* made me feel unsure about my reading of the work. Furthermore, my awareness of the partial nature of my experience of *Papier mutiforme et Papier Comestible* fundamentally informed my analysis of the work. I suggest the sense of unease that was present in both experiences was due to the traditions of the 'work' and the convention, implied in Davies' quote, that audiences experience works directly, and are able to 'get' the work by encountering it 'in full'.

Indeed, analytic frameworks for dance often deal with the work as a complete event which can be interpreted through consideration of its components. For example, key frameworks for dance analysis developed by Janet Adshead, Michael Huxley, Pauline Hodgins and Valerie Briginshaw (1988) and Susan Leigh Foster (1986) suggest that analysis of the structure of the work is central to understanding and interpretation. Foster's approach comprises analysis of the style, vocabulary and syntax of the work, which she describes as its 'structural features' (1986: 97) and focuses on how repetition and other ordering principles become apparent through the analysis of the work. Adshead et al's model encourages spectators to analyse and interpret the relationships between components such as music, movement, space and structure. This approach implies that the work's components can be fully accessed, recognised and attended to. Analysis is described as allowing for the "*minutely detailed examination*" of a dance work's parts (Adshead 1999:12, italics in the original). The idea that a work's parts can be examined in such detail does not appear to account for the fragmentation of the viewing experience offered by works such as *Papier mutiforme et Papier Comestible* and *Still Life*, during which the components of the work are not entirely available, or even the partial attention paid by spectators, which also occurs in more conventional theatre contexts. This model appears to assume complete access to a work is possible through spectatorship.

Although they differ in their approaches, both these frameworks imply a viewing experience during which the spectator has access to all the components of a work, and these are encountered in a linear way. Foster acknowledges that audiences might enter and exit while the dancers are moving in the space (1986: 63), pointing towards how the framing of a work might invoke a partial experience for the viewer. However, partial experiences are not only created through choreographic decisions. Even in a conventional theatre-based performance, each person in the audience attends differently to the person next to them but the tools developed to analyse dance don't always acknowledge the role of attention. These models were developed over 30 years ago and both Foster's and Adshead's later work moves away from a structural approach, exploring instead frameworks such as kinaesthetic empathy (Foster 2010) and inter-textuality (Adshead 1999). Nevertheless, they

have been influential in the development of subsequent frameworks for analysing dance and are still taught on undergraduate dance programmes, meaning that they inform spectatorship within the field. For example, the influence of these models can be detected in my analysis through my focus on the structure of both works.

*Still Life* and *Papier mutlifforme et Papier Comestible* require different modes of attention to one another, and deal with the partial in different ways. However, I suggest that considering them alongside each other demonstrates how works might call for alternative modes of understanding the experience of performance. Both works rupture the conventional structures of performance through the way they direct the audience. The macro-work has a beginning and an end, but each person's experience of the micro-works contained within them has its own structure, which intersects with the larger arc of the performance. In this way, the works relate to wider practices that move away from conventional ways of organising choreographic structures. For example, macro and micro works can be found in the types of durational performance, referred to by MacPherson, during which activity occurs for a prolonged period of time such as Marina Abramovich's *The Artist is Present* (2010). During such events, audience members engage with an ongoing performance of the macro work for a short period of time. Often, people are able to come and go as they please, allowing them to determine to some extent the shape of their micro work. Another example is Simon Ellis and Shannon Bott's work *Inert* (2006) was performed for two audience members who occupied different positions in space in order to experience two different sides or micro-works of the same macro-work. The macro/micro work framework is also relevant to works made up of multiple episodes, such as *52 Portraits* (2016) by Jonathan Burrows, Matteo Fargion and Hugo Glendinning and Benjamin Millepied's *Marfa Dance Episodes* (2017). Both of these works exist only online and comprise multiple individual films, which were originally transmitted individually. Conceptualising each individual film as a micro-work helps to make sense of the relationship between the work and its multiple parts and allows us to articulate what it is that we have seen when we have had an experience of a work that is simultaneously partial and complete.

Furthermore, the micro/macro work structure can also help us to account for the way that we attend only partially even in more conventional theatre contexts. Even in contexts where the spectator is present for the entire duration of the work and able to see all of the actions presented by the performers, their attention shapes what it is that they encounter and is therefore necessarily partial. Each viewing experience therefore cultivates a micro-work, implying that the macro-work is an entity that is always inaccessible.

## Conclusion

Reflecting on my experience of *Still Life* and *Papier mutlifforme et Papier Comestible* highlights how our individual ways of engaging and awareness of the partial nature of our experience is central to understanding and analysing the works. My experience of these works gave rise to questions about mobility, stillness, agency and spectacle. These questions arose through my consideration of the form, structure and content of the works alongside my conscious questioning of what come before, is yet to come, or takes place alongside, giving rise to a form of spectatorship during which I was continually questioning my own knowledge of the work and ability to interpret it appropriately. I suggest that these

experiences highlight the partial nature of all spectatorship, calling into question philosophical and analytic paradigms that imply spectators are able to experience a work directly or in full.

The discourses in philosophical aesthetics and dance analysis that I have discussed seem to similarly imply that we can encounter a work in its entirety. They seem to arise from the consideration of art works that follow conventional structures and allow the spectator to see all of the components at once. Considering two works which move against these traditions, reveals how spectatorship is always partial and that therefore the ways we think about what the work is and what it means to experience it require rethinking. The macro/micro work schema draws attention to the way that an experience can be simultaneously partial and complete and offers a starting point to further interrogate the ways that experience and ontology interact. In order to further probe this area, I suggest we need to continue to examine works which push at the edges of the conventions in dance regarding structure, duration and form and rethink what it means to engage with and access works of dance and performance.

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